से ही उस पुरस्कार की गुणवत्ता तोली जाती है। ज्ञानपीठ और सरस्वती सम्मान में 2 लाख और 3 लाख दिए जाते हैं, लेकिन साहित्य अकादमी में केवल 25 हजार दिए जाते हैं, इसलिए क्या सरकार के पास कोई ऐसा विचार है कि उसकी इस पुरस्कार राशि को बढ़ाया जाए?

डा० मुरली मनोहर जोशी: सर, आपके प्रश्न के प्रथम भाग का तो उत्तर मैं दे चुका हूं। इसमें

The Haksar Committee had reviewed the working of the Sahitya Akademi and the Sangeet Natak Akademi as well. There is no proposal to appoint another Committee at the moment.

बाकी जहां तक पुरस्कार का सवाल है, तो यह तो आप लोगों पर निर्भर करता है, जितनी धनराशि संसद हमें स्वीकृत करेगी उसके हिसाब से पुरस्कार बंट जायेंगे।

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to enquire whether any steps are being taken to stop and even withdraw the vulgar and forward paintings that are circulating in the country under the name of a distinguished artist like Hussain.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This supplementary does not arise out of this question.

Specification for Mineral Water

*146. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to the answer to the Unstarred Question 979 given in the Rajys Sabha on 31st July, 1997 and state:

(a) the specifications for mineral water formulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards;

(b) whether there is any check on different mineral water brands and if so, when, where and how;

(c) whether any brands have been found to violate the specifications formulated by the B.I.S.; and

(d) the penalty, if any, imposed during the last three years;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): (a) to (d) a statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The extract of Standards for natural mineral water formulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) are at Annexure *[See Appendix 184 Annexure No. 34]*.

(b) to (d) As the Standards formulated by the BIS are primarily voluntary in nature and no manufacturer has taken BIS Certification mark so far for mineral water, the question of BIS taking punitive action does not arise.

However, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration rules 1955, standards for mineral water have been laid down and the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, provides for penalties in cases where violation comes to notice. Therefore, the Food Health Authorities of States/UTs, administering the provisions of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, keep a vigil on quality of mineral water by drawing random samples of mineral water from the market and checking the quality.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Sir, I am afraid, the authorities are not conscious of what is happening in the name of mineral water. Perhaps, the first mineral water brand that hit the market was Bisleri. A couple of years back, an important Embassy in India said that it was not good enough, not healthy enough and that they were going to discontinue it. I will not go into the merits of the case, whether Bisleri was right or whether that Embassy was right, but two things are very clear. This bottled is of doubtful quality. Many of these bottles don't even claim to be mineral water. We know that they are just plain tap water, and by using this plastic bottle, they mislead the people into thinking that it is mineral water like Bisleri etc. etc.—This is the situation. And these plastic bottles are

bio-nondegradable. It is an assault on the environment. The Government claims that under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955, all mineral water is covered. Part (a) of my question is: Does the Food Adulteration Law cover ordinary water? These bottles don't even claim it to be minteral water. Part (b) is: Will the Government consider requiring all water bottlers to get a BIS certification? Part (c) of question is this. The Government claims that it is keeping a vigil on the quality of mineral water. I would like to know what this vigilance reveals, and whether anybody has been prosecuted or convicted so far.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, with regard to this mineral water, I completely agree with the hon. Member. In fact, this type of mineral water or bottled water selling has come to our notice. It is everybody's knowledge that wherever we go, whether to the railway stations or to the bus stands, if ordinary people, or for that matter anybody else, want to drink water, they have to pay money and then only they are given water to drink. There is the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act that is in force. But whatever complaints we receive, those are referred to the Ministry. We take that into account and investigate those cases. But with regard to mineral water, Sir, as on date, in Delhi and several other States, that has come to our notice and we have sent random samples for tests. They are also revealing that. We have attached the Annexures with the papers. But with regard to this general water, whether it is the municipal water or the drinking water, we don't have any control over that, and municipalities and other institutions are entrusted with the responsibility to provide pure drinking water to the people. But as far as the Ministry is concerned, if this misuse or violation of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act is taking place, and if that comes to our notice, we take prompt action, Sir.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Sir, the Minister has not answered his questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malkani is the person who is going to raise it.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Sir, it is clear that a double fraud is being played on the consumer. I would like to know what the Government proposes to do in the matter. Can they, for example, require that any water that is bottled shall carry a certification? Otherwise, there should be a ban on it. Is the Government willing to consider that?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, so far we have sent 143 samples for tests. As our hon. Member is afraid, if there is an increasing trend, certainly we will consider it actively and work it out.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: The matter has to be taken a little more seriously than that. Out of the 143 cases, how many prosecutions are there and how many convictions are there?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, we have taken note of that. We have sent them for tests and they are being done. This is the process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question which the hon. Member asked was whether in view of the reports the Government would think of certification of the water bottles.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Any water that is bottled must be certified.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, the matter can be examined. It is a serious matter. It can be examined.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: That means it may be examined or it may not be examined also.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as Malkaniji has suggested, it is the biggest fraud played on the people. Today in India milk costs Rs. 8. Milk is not like water. It has to be produced. Water costs Rs. 12. We have been experiencing for the last four or five years that it has become a fashion everywhere to sell water. You go to a restaurant, they will ask you whether you want mineral water. You look at others. Then

you will feel like having the mineral water. There is a charge, a tax, on the mineral water. Finally it comes to Rs. 20. My question to the hon. Minister is this. What is the agency that is going to certify whether it is really mineral water on it is only water. Nobody is testing it to find our whether there are any mineral contents or not. It is only water just put into a bottle with a new brand name and you are being deceived. So, what is the agency to testify or to certify whether it is really mineral water? Will the Government consider imposing a ban on the sale of spurious water in the name of mineral water till such time?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, it is actually under consideration. The compulsory BIS certification of mineral water, that is, drinking water, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act is under the consideration of the Ministry.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Does the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act cover ordinary water. These people do not claim to be selling mineral water? They just say, fine water, good water or this water or that water. They don't say that it is mineral water. Does the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act cover the ordinary water?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: That oesn't cover the ordinary water, Sir. *Interruptions)...*

SHRI MD. SALIM: Then you have to amend the Act. The question is whether you will amend the Act. The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act does not cover the mineral water. To make certification compulsory, will you amend the Act?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, this is a recent development. *(Interruptions)...* All this is a recent development. *(Interruptions)...*

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: This is there for the last ten years. *(Interruptions)...*

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. Please not now. I am calling one by one. Why does everybody get up? Shri Raghavji.

श्री राघवजी: माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या बी०आई०एस० सर्टिफिकेट भविष्य में सभी मिनरल वाटर्स के लिए जरूरी करेंगे? दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि वर्ष 1997-98 में कितने प्रकरणों में टेस्ट किए गए और कितने प्रकरणों में टेस्ट करने पर वह पानी मिनरल वाॅटर पाया गया?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, actually ordinary water does not come under the Health Ministry. It is coming under some other Ministries, the Ministries of Rural and Urban Development. Actually we are considering to bring the BIS, the Burearu of Indian Standards, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. If the hon. Members desire, it can be pursued further so as to prevent this menace and we will consider this in the Ministry, Sir. Water generally comes under some other Ministries. It doesn't come under the Health Ministry.

SHRI RAGHAVJI: Sir, I asked: In the year 1997-98 how many tests were conducted? I also asked: In those tests, in how many bottles was mineral water found? He has not given the figures.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He does not have the figures. Why are you repeating it?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, this is the only point on which I agree with Shri Malkani for a change. Sir, if you read the question, this is an issue which he had raised in 1997. I had raised the same issue twice in 1997 through Starred Questions. I am very sorry to find that this is just a cyclostyle copy of whatever was said in 1997. Governments may change, but no decision is taken. The basic question is this. Who is going to change the Act? Can his Ministry do it? Unless this Act is amended, you will go on deputing your officers and you will go on repeating that when the Food Adulteration Act, 1955, was passed, there was no mineral water. What are we discussing here in Parliament? This is a Starred Question. The Minister should have come prepared knowing fully

well that this question had been put by Shri Malkani last year also. If people ask how much you have proceeded on the question of adulterated mineral water in one year and whether you have proceeded even an ich, the Minister would say, "We will consider it". Sir, I seek your protection. People are being cheated. They are doing all sorts of things.

Many reports have come from Chennai that mineral water is a fountain-head of contamination. 'Fountain-head of Contamination' was the caption in the *Indian Express.* I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister right now. I would like to know whether he would give a specific assurance to the House that this Act would be amended in this Session and that people would get the real mineral water; otherwise, this contaminated mineral water should be banned. If he cannot do it this week, he can do it next week. I want this assurance from the Minster; otherwise this question should be repeated next time. Whenever the Minister comes, he should come prepared with the reply.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member is repeating the same thing and he will go on repeating the same thing..... ....*(Interruptions).* I don't have any reply to the question.... *(Interruptions).*

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we seek your protection. *(Interruptions).* When will the Minister reply to this question? What is the timeframe within which he is going to bring a legislation?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, I have explained the position. Ordinary water does not come under the Health Ministry. There are several other Departments and Ministries which are dealing with water. So far as mineral water is concerned, all bottled water which is sold is not mineral water. There are several types of water sold. BIS certification is also voluntary. It is not compulsory.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Why don't you make it compulsory? *(Interruptions).*

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, that is the position as of today. I am giving you the facts. If you want an answer which is agreeable to you, I can very much answer in that way. But I am giving you the facts. As the hon. Member said, that was the position in 1997. Now it is 1998. What is the position today? Neither do I have nor does my office have anything new to give. *(Interruptions).*

The Ministries of Rural and Urban Development, municipalities, local bodies and many other departments are dealing withordinary water. Sir, we will hold discussions at the inter-ministerial level. We will find out a solution to this problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is very serious. The basic drinking water, whether ordinary water or mineral water, is polluting the health of the people of the country. Even the elite-class people are drinking this water. This question may come up in an inter-ministerial meeting. Is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs sitting over here? Mr. Minister, I would like you to hold an inter-ministerial meeting on this issue. When this question comes up next time, it should be properly replied to because the basic question is of drinking water, whether ordinary water or mineral water, concerning the health of the people.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NAIK): Sir I note your views and instructions.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the question be taken up next week?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will move on to the next question... *(Interruptions)* Mr. Alagh, if you have anything to say, please give it in writing to the Minister.

147. **[The Questioner (Shri Debabrata Biswas) was absent. For answer *vide* col-....infra.]**

148. **[The Questioners (Shri Barjinder Singh Hamdard and Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia) were absent. For answer *vide* col..... infra.]**

149. **[The Questioner (Shri K.M. Khan) was absent. For answer *vide* col..... infra.]**

Sale of Scattered Aluminium Foil and Plastic Material Collected by the Ragpickers from the Railway Stations in Delhi

*150. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Statesman dated 19th December, 1997, about the collection of scattered aluminium foil, plastic glasses, plates, spoons and soft drinking straws by the ragpickers at Delhi railway stations who sell them back to the shopkeepers; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Checks have been intensified by the Railways, particularly on Northern Railway to curb the activity of recycling of disposable containers in Delhi area. Efforts are being made to avoid use of plastic cups/glasses as far as possible and to replace them gradually by biodegradable paper cups/glasses. Public awareness is being created by use of stickers and by making announcements on the Public Address System to crush such items after use.

SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Sir, this is a very serious matter. We have been complaining about this issue again and again. Here, the Minister's reply does not speak about the specific action taken on the matter. I would like to know what specific steps the Government intends to take to stop this practice.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the question was regarding sale of scattered aluminium foil and plastic material collected by ragpickers from the railway station in Delhi. We have examined the issue and we are trying to ensure firstly that plastic containers are not thrown away. We are also putting stickers on these containers that they should be crushed after use. For this, we seek the co-operation of the people who are using plastic containers. Once they are crushed, they cannot be sold. We are conducting surprise checks as well. In the month of April, over a period of 15 days, we conducted seven checks at the New Delhi railway station, and eight to ten boys, who were trying to collect them, were caught. These ragpickers first collect these plastic containers; then these are purchased by the recyclers of plastic materials. They manufacture granules and sub-standard bags out of them. So, recycling goes on everywhere. But, so far as water bottles are concerned, it has to be ensured that they are not allowed to be picked up by the ragpickers. So, we are ensuring that ragpickers are not allowed to come into the railway station premises.

SHRI S. RAMACHANDARAN PILLAI: Sir, the Minister admits that this is a thing which has been going on for several years. It has also come to the notice of the Ministry that violations are there. I would like to know from the Minister whether the Ministry has initiated any action against the wrong-doers. I also want to know from the Minister whether there are adequate provisions in the law to prosecute such offenders.

The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri S. Ramachandran Pillai.